

NND 969053
By HRM/AL Date 5/22/98DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
June 9, 2005~~SECRET~~

September 3, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State

SUBJECT: Mission to Pakistan to Review Relief, Refugee
and Related Issues

As instructed by the President during his meeting with the Senior Review Group August 11, the undersigned officer discussed the food and relief problems of East Pakistan, and related issues, with President Yahya Khan and principal officials of his government in Islamabad and Dacca, August 17-23. (See Tab A for schedule of meetings.)

President Yahya Khan placed high importance on receiving President Nixon's views -- both by letter and by his emissary -- and sought to accommodate Pakistan's policies to our point of view. The principal conclusions from the mission follow.

A. RELIEF PROBLEMS

Priority of Food Relief Effort. President Yahya Khan concurs in our assessment that there will be a serious food shortage in East Pakistan during late September into December unless large imports of food can be effectively distributed. If famine is not avoided, he believes the effect on Pakistan's political position in the East Wing would be disastrous. Hence, Yahya Khan regards maintenance of food stocks and sustained distribution from government supply depots as a prime strategic objective. There is now only three to four weeks' food supply at most depots, even at reduced rations -- contrasted with more ample stocks at the ocean ports of Chittagong and Khulna. The immediate task is the transport of food from these ocean ports up-country to meet minimum consumption needs through the end of December.

Attitude Toward UN Relief Mission. Yahya Khan grudgingly approved the 38 man UN headquarters group for Dacca to help with relief in East Pakistan. He did not believe the UN would perform, stressing that they had done little since he requested their help some ten weeks ago. Also, he resented a UN presence in Pakistan when India had refused. But, because the U.S. recommended that relief be channeled through the UN, Yahya Khan accepted the UN Relief Mission. He will probably accept additional UN field personnel up to a proposed total of 117 men, only if we again urge that he do so.

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A Bengali Civilian Governor. Discussion of administrative issues affecting the relief effort provided an opportunity to suggest a reduced role for the military in the civil administration of East Pakistan. Again, Yahya Khan was responsive by declaring that his policy was for a "civilian-ization of the Government in East Pakistan. (Prior evidence indicated that military direction of civil affairs had been greatly increasing.) Yahya Khan accepted the suggestion of splitting the civilian functions of the Governor from the security functions of the Martial Law Administrator, and said we had anticipated his decision to appoint Dr. A. M. Malik -- a loyal and trusted Bengali as Governor of East Pakistan.

Overall Food and Relief Coordinator for East Pakistan. When it was pointed out that eight officials held responsibility for different aspects of food, transport, distribution and relief programs in East Pakistan, but that no one was operationally in overall charge, Yahya Khan initially found the criticism puzzling, but then accepted it. He later designated the new Chief Secretary as Food and Relief Coordinator for East Pakistan.

Priority Assistance Need is River Transport. Yahya Khan sees transport within East Pakistan as critical to control of the province. A major attempt is being made by the Mukti Bahini forces (armed guerrillas of Bangla Desh) to disrupt rail and road transport from Chittagong north, which historically has carried 75 percent of the internal tonnage (60 percent rail, 15 percent road). "The Battle for the Life of the province is intensifying with rail and road bridges and locomotives the primary targets of guerrilla activity. As a result rail transportation has been reduced to no more than 20 percent of normal capacity, and maintenance of even this capacity is by no means certain. Consequently, movement of food and relief supplies will have to be by river.

Yahya Khan cursed the stupidity which had neglected investment in river transport in favor of road and rail development. He regarded the arrival of some 29 coastal ships -- 25 of which are being financed by U. S. assistance -- as a real contribution to the movement of food from ocean to up-country river ports. Yahya Khan asked that the coastal ships arrive promptly. Additional water transport assistance sought by Pakistan are tugs to pull barges, ferries to bridge river crossings, and military-type landing craft.

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Food Distribution Beyond River Ports Also Essential.

Distribution of food beyond river ports was discussed as an area of weakness in relief operations. It was agreed that every effort should be made to mobilize small local boats and trucks by paying premium rates and that emergency relief works would help in food distribution. We praised the new Chief Secretary as the man who had the best grasp of these problems and, as mentioned above, President Yahya Khan later appointed him overall Food and Relief Coordinator.

Need for Relief Works. President Yahya Khan accepted our recommendation for a government-sponsored emergency relief works program in East Pakistan as an important means of stimulating income and providing for the purchase of food. He approved a \$20 million allocation for emergency relief work, and accepted a U. S. contribution of \$10 million in rupees for this purpose which we offered from U.S.-owned excess rupee holdings. However, implementation of the program may be slow because the government is not fully convinced that a large-scale works program to stimulate purchasing power is absolutely essential.

Security and Integrity of Relief Operations. The Mukti Bahini guerrilla forces are gradually stepping up the intensity and sophistication of their operations in the north and south central areas, and particularly along the eastern border -- well away from refugee camps near Calcutta which are shown to distinguished visitors. (See Tab B for map of Mukti Bahini major operational areas.) While road and rail transport is the primary target, river ports have been attacked and two Pakistan river boats damaged by sophisticated limpet mines. In these circumstances (a) food and relief shipments transported under UN auspices must not be mixed with general and military cargoes, (b) transport provided for relief must only move relief goods, even if this means that they travel empty on return trips, and (c) Pakistan soldiers should not escort relief shipments. These points had not been accepted prior to our mission. Yahya Khan and his Governor, Tikka Khan, both believed that relief transport, and to some extent relief distribution, should be under military control -- points which we firmly resisted. The major function of the UN Mission -- and the UN emblem on movement of relief goods -- must be to establish that humanitarian relief is neutral and "above the battle". If this is not accepted by all parties -- Pakistan, Mukti Bahini insurgents and India -- the UN will fail in its relief mission. Governor Tikka Khan appeared to grudgingly accept this point of view, but believed that the UN would fail to assure the security of relief transport in any case. We affirmed in

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the strongest terms possible to both Pakistan and UN officials that there should be no mixed relief and non-relief cargoes on relief ships, no carrying of jute on return trips (jute exports are a prime target of the insurgents), and no military control, or escort, for the transport and distribution of relief goods.

"Laissez Passez" for Humanitarian Relief Depends on Tacit Indian Cooperation. The Mukti Bahini guerilla forces and the Bangla Desh radio (operating in India) have not yet decided their attitude toward UN sponsored humanitarian food and relief movements in East Pakistan. UN officials in Dacca should be able to assure the integrity of relief operations, but they cannot contact Mukti Bahini "enemy" forces without compromising their position with the Pakistan authorities. Consequently, the UN must gain agreement directly with Mukti Bahini leaders that there will be free passage of relief supplies. We believe the U.S. Government can help by discussions in New Delhi of overall relief needs and problems both in East Pakistan and the refugee camps in India -- stressing the link between the two.

Leadership of UN Field Operation Critical. The UN relief effort is at a critical stage. Security and coordination of transport problems must be handled swiftly in a sensitive and difficult operational situation. The UN field staff is just arriving, most without prior experience in Pakistan, and leadership of the UN Mission is not resolved. For these reasons we strongly recommended that the UN Secretariat in New York move swiftly to take effective charge of their operation.

B. REFUGEE AND RELATED POLITICAL ISSUES

Psychological Factors More Important than Economic in Refugee Movement. While a major concern is that famine would probably lead to further large-scale refugee movement into India, psychological factors have been more important than economic in the flight of refugees up to this point. Communal riots in late April, and the resulting fear, fueled the mass exodus to India. Attacked by government forces, the retreating Bangla Desh nationalist groups turned on the Urdu-speaking Bihari communities (earlier refugees from India totalling some two million.) There followed a counter-riot of the Biharis and Urdu-speaking soldiers against Bengali nationalists and Hindus.

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West Pakistan officials state they are attempting to dampen the communal fires. When asked about exclusion of Hindus from relief assistance in the cyclone disaster area, President Yahya Khan replied that "discrimination against Hindus was contrary to instructions," and that he "encourages the return of the refugees."

Hindus Not Yet Safe in East Pakistan. American voluntary agency representatives in Dacca told us that it was not safe for Hindus to return to their homes. They cited known cases of returnees who had met with fatal accidents. The Catholic Relief Services Director reported that the presence of foreigners helps to assure the safety of the remaining minority communities.

Refugees Probably Still Leaving East Pakistan. While it is difficult to establish facts concerning current refugee movements, the UN Representative for Refugees in East Pakistan estimates that no more than 34,000 refugees had returned from India through reception centers since June, and that East Pakistanis continue to flee to India at a rate of 20,000 to 30,000 a day.

President Yahya Khan categorically denied that refugees were leaving East Pakistan. He said his army was on the borders and it had orders to stop East Pakistanis from leaving and infiltrators from entering. Governor Tikka Khan, however, said that the army's administrative control over many of the border areas was not assured. Without independent verification by impartial observers, it is impossible to sort out accurately the conflicting claims. (India claims over eight million Pakistan refugees in India, and Pakistan claims the number does not exceed two and a half million.)

Progress in Political Accommodation. President Yahya Khan has not progressed far in devising a formula for political accommodation. His approach to the Awami League is essentially juridical. Those against whom no criminal charges have been made may return and be assured that they will not be tried. So far only 88 elected Awami League members of the General Assembly and some 94 members of the Provincial Assembly have been cleared of criminal charges. Amnesty for all other Awami League and Bengali refugees -- in the sense of freedom from possible criminal charges -- is still uncertain.

Of the 88 elected members of the General Assembly, Yahya Khan said only 16 were in Dacca protected by his army -- and one of these had been killed. When we urged him to lift the illegal ban

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on the Awami League "cleansed of its former leadership" to encourage others of the 88 to return, Yahya Khan replied he had gone as far as West Pakistan opinion would tolerate in making concessions to Awami League sessionists.

Trial of Mujibur Rahman. The juridical approach extends to Mujibur Rahman, who "will have a fair trial since the matter is entirely in the hands of the judiciary", Yahya Khan said. He described the arrangements for a vigorous and independent defense counsel for Mujib. In his own mind Yahya Khan has no doubt that Mujib is guilty. "It was two assemblies, two this and two that, but when it came to two flags and they tore down the flag of Pakistan, that was too much," he said. (Comment: If Mujibur Rahman publicly recanted the "two flags", could he still play a useful role?)

We were told by Bengali friends that if Mujib is killed, there would be a further mass exodus of refugees from East Pakistan, an assessment which we conveyed to Yahya Khan, through his principal Minister, M. M. Ahmad. This led us to stress that Mujibur Rahman is more dangerous dead than alive to the unity of Pakistan.

Anti-Hindu Feeling in East Pakistan Likely to Increase. As the Mukti Bahini guerrilla attacks increase in intensity, the pressure against the Hindu minority still in East Pakistan also will intensify. General Rahim Khan (charged with civil affairs in the East and recommended to us by Yahya Khan as his "sweet general") said 200 local leaders had been killed by Mukti Bahini attacks in the struggle which is now beginning for administrative control of rural areas. The government is turning to, and arming as irregulars, the most deeply orthodox Muslims in the rural villages. These tend to be the poorer, opportunistic elements with little or no experience in leadership roles, but with fierce loyalty to Islam and equally fierce anti-Hindu feelings. This polarization of the rural social and administrative structure has not gone far beyond the border area as yet, but it will almost certainly continue in response to mounting Mukti Bahini guerrilla attacks.

In these circumstances, India's current support for the Mukti Bahini -- through arms, training and a cross border sanctuary -- intensifies anti-Hindu feeling in East Pakistan and leads to the further flight of Hindu refugees to India. (The pre-March 25 Hindu population of East Pakistan has been estimated at about eleven million.)

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General Rahim Khan told us of plans to abolish all traditional village leaders and councils and displace them with thoroughly loyal peace committees -- the deeply orthodox Muslims mentioned above. We strongly advised against it on the grounds that the resulting social and administrative disruption would force traditional village leadership into opposition, extend the conflict and -- in our judgment -- open the way to radicalization of the rural areas. Normally, it would be difficult to imagine a way to completely disrupt a traditional subsistence society and economy like that of East Pakistan. But Pakistani officers are capable of doing it, as they seek to solve an immediate and increasingly urgent military problem.

C. FRAMEWORK FOR RELIEF AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Massive relief to East Pakistan estimated at \$315 million, with a proposed U.S. share of \$235 million. We estimate that a massive relief program for East Pakistan for FY 1972 could cost up to \$315 million to address the following key problems which have been identified:

	<u>\$ Millions</u>
- Food Supplies	155
Current PL 480 commitments meet most of anticipated requirements for cereals, oil and high protein food	
- Transport	25
River boats, coastal vessels, tugs, trucks, spares and contingent airlift of food for possible famine pockets	
- Direct Relief	10
Child feeding, support of UN and voluntary agency programs, medical supplies	
- Work Relief (rupees)	20
A government sponsored work relief program to stimulate income and provide employment	

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\$ Millions

- Agricultural Inputs

30

Fertilizer, pesticides, pumps, sprayers,
parts to prevent drop in local rice
production next year

- Refugee Resettlement

75

Costs of housing, other necessities for a
productive life, reestablishment of
community services, assuming 3 million
(or all Muslims now in India) return

Total \$315

A strong effort should continue to be made through the United Nations to obtain contributions from other countries, but realistically we assume the U. S. will probably share about 75 percent of the costs, for a U. S. share of about \$235 million -- \$115 million PL 480, \$25 million U.S.-owned excess rupees, and up to \$95 million appropriated dollars. (See Tab C for details on the proposed relief program for East Pakistan.)

Mending Pakistan's Consortium Relations. President Yahya Khan and his Economic Advisor, M. M. Ahmad, want to improve relations with the consortium, but they prefer to move slowly in making financial requests to avoid further embarrassment to Pakistan in its relations with other governments and the World Bank. We proposed a consortium meeting in the third week in September -- at the time of the Bank/Fund Executive Directors Meeting in Washington -- to review: (a) immediate relief requirements for East Pakistan and the need for further international help, (b) extension of debt relief by common donor action, and (c) somewhat longer term relief and reconstruction needs, particularly for agriculture. Our initiative in seeking to mend Pakistan consortium relations was appreciated by President Yahya Khan and his Economic Advisor. However, given member country attitudes, they insisted that the next consortium meeting agenda be restricted to debt and relief assistance for East Pakistan. We urged, nonetheless, that the consortium also should consider requirements for agricultural commodity assistance. We are

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working with the Bank to assure the necessary coordination and staff work.

Relief for refugees in India estimated at \$830 million with a proposed U.S. share of \$320 million. Pakistan refugee relief costs in India will total \$830 million for FY 1972 (\$440 million for food and \$390 million for non-food relief) on the basis of 8 million refugees. This staggering refugee burden is about equal to total annual consortium aid to India.

PL 480 can help meet requirements for wheat, rice, oil and other commodities. To date we have provided \$40 million of food assistance, and PL 480 relief could reach \$170 million.

A planned 40 percent U.S. share of the refugee burden would mean \$150 million in dollars to help with non-food costs, such as shelter, clothing, sanitation, medicine and special food supplements particularly for children. We have contributed \$30 million in grants for this purpose to date.

Thus, total U.S. assistance for the refugees who are in India could reach \$320 million.

India also will seek a maximum amount of development loans through the aid donor consortium to minimize the loss of momentum in its development program during this period of extraordinary financial burden. (See Tab D for details on refugee support costs in India.)

D. RECOMMENDED FUTURE LINES OF ACTION

President Nixon's initiative in directing massive relief to East Pakistan has: (a) improved the public and moral posture of President Yahya Khan's government (through its concern for relief to its citizens in the East Wing), (b) reduced the prospects of widespread famine, (c) led to some deemphasis of military control over civil affairs, and (d) brought a Bengali Governor to head the civil administration in East Pakistan. These are important gains which were only possible because of our policy of maintaining a dialogue with Pakistan, as well as with India. We should continue to keep open channels of communication and influence.

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Carrying forward the relief effort involves us in difficult -- but manageable -- operational problems of putting starch into the UN organizational structure and using our influence with Pakistan to keep the UN relief effort to the fore. Our approach of providing relief through the UN is essential if we are to avoid U.S. involvement in the "Battle for the Transport Lifeline" when it comes to transport of relief supplies. The critical element for the success of our massive relief policy through the UN is acceptance, or tolerance, by all parties -- Pakistan, Mukti Bahini insurgents, and India -- that food and humanitarian concern for the people of East Pakistan is "above the battle." The Indian attitude appears likely to be a governing factor; the Government of India must accept the fact that humanitarian relief cannot be limited by political boundary. Refugees and relief in India and in East Pakistan are integral parts of the same problem.

While we have made some progress on relief and reform in East Pakistan, the security situation continues to deteriorate and the Hindu population is still leaving the Province. Whatever the origins of the conflict as an internal Pakistan problem, today India is "fighting" Pakistan by proxy through its support to the Mukti Bahini insurgents and Pakistan, indirectly, is fighting back by pursuing policies which will encourage the entire 11 million Hindu population of East Pakistan to go to India and not return. Neither arrived at this mode of warfare by advance design but both appear to have "innocently" seized the "weapons" at hand. The situation urgently calls for the equivalent of a "cease fire," or "stand fast." Elements of an equivalent "cease and stand fast" would appear to be:

For Pakistan: A public declaration that protection of all minorities -- the 300,000 Bengalis in West Pakistan and the Hindu minorities in East Pakistan -- is a sacred trust. The new Bengali Governor, Dr. Malik, has two overwhelming advantages for the job. He is trusted by Yahya Khan and he has an established public record of espousing the cause of Muslim-Hindu harmony. (He showed us clippings from Calcutta newspapers in the early 1950's which praised his courageous stand on this issue.) We should encourage Yahya Khan to support Dr. Malik in measures to reduce anti-religious passions against Hindus whose home is East Pakistan. (The 80 million Muslims in India are hostage to the success of this policy).

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For India: The Government of India must face the reality that continuing economic assistance for relief and economic development, both urgently needed, will be supported by the publics in Western countries only if every effort is made to reduce tensions and forestall the headlong plunge to war. India bears responsibility which cannot be ignored for the training, arming and providing cross border sanctuary for Mukti Bahini. We should parallel our approach to Pakistan on relief needs and administration with similar discussions with India at an appropriate level. Our objectives would be to encourage:

(a) Indian support for the principle that movement of relief goods for East Pakistan is above political considerations and military interdiction. Some supply of food to East Pakistan might be arranged through India,

(b) Indian recognition that intensification of insurgency -- however it occurs -- increases the flow of refugees to India and reduces the chance of their return,

(c) Indian recognition that their objective of avoiding radicalizing Awami League leadership will fail because intensification of the insurgency will radicalize rural East Bengal, with potentially serious political repercussion in Eastern India,

(d) A 60-day dampening of insurgent activity, insofar as India can use its good offices to this end, to permit cooling of anti-Hindu passions in East Pakistan and to encourage a calmer process of political negotiation between the Pakistan Government and Bangla Desh representatives, and

(e) Acceptance by India that UN observers stationed in East Pakistan can cross into India on valid refugee business.

Without making our relief and economic aid directly contingent on Indian performance on the above points, we would want India to understand the link which we see between helping refugees in India and establishing conditions in East Pakistan for the return of all refugees. We should seek to arrive at a mutuality of interest on this linkage.

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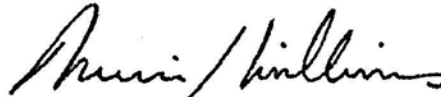
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The steps proposed, to be taken separately but on parallel lines, by both India and Pakistan, would require significant changes in the way each now views its vital interests in East Pakistan. If, however, some palpable degree of "cease and stand fast" can be encouraged on both sides, ways may be opened for greater progress toward political accommodation between the leaders of Pakistan and the Awami League/Bangla Desh leadership.



Maurice J. Williams
Coordinator of U.S. Disaster
Relief for East Pakistan

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